

DFS COVID-Relief Funds

August, 2020

As of the start of August, 2020, Congress has passed three economic relief bills in response to COVID-19, and is considering a fourth. The Department of Family Services (DFS) has received federal funding under these relief bills both directly, in lump sums to state-administered programs supported in whole or in part by federal funds, as well as indirectly, through temporary changes to federal funding formulas and the Governor's allocation of the \$1.25B received by the state of Wyoming under the CARES Act. The economic relief bills and grants relevant to DFS include:

- The Coronavirus Preparedness & Response Supplemental Appropriations Act, enacted March 6th, 2020 (CPRSAA);
- The Families First Coronavirus Response Act, 2020, enacted March 18th, 2020 (FFCRA); and,
- The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, enacted March 27th, 2020 (CARES), which includes the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER).

Direct Federal Funding

DFS has received a total of **\$12,313,652** in direct funding from federal agencies to state-administered programs to assist children and families.

\$4.1M for Child Care

DFS received \$4,166,167 for the Child Development Block Grant (CCDBG) via the CARES Act. States were given flexibility in how to spend the additional CCDBG funds. DFS chose to allocate the \$4.1M as follows:

- \$900K to the child care assistance program to pay providers the full authorized amount of a child's assistance payment in March, April, May, and June, rather than for actual attendance;
- \$1.5M in grants to licensed child care providers to support continued operations. Grant amounts were determined by licensed capacity and distributed by Wyoming Kids First.
 - \$1,000 each to family child care homes.
 - \$1,500 each to family child care centers.
 - \$3,800 to child care centers.
- \$1.7M for application-based grants available to all child care providers based on need and distributed by Wyoming Kids First.

\$4.0M for Homelessness

Wyoming was allocated a total of \$4,055,227 in federal CARES Act funding to the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), which DFS operates as a pass-through program to regional community providers of homelessness services. DFS has received the first wave of funding, in the amount of \$1,153,541. The second wave of funding, in the amount of \$2,901,686, has not yet been released by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

\$2.4M for Energy Assistance

DFS received \$2,416,112 through the CARES Act for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) to extend the crisis season and provide additional benefits, including cooling costs and A/C unit cleaning and repair.

\$1.3M for Food Assistance

Wyoming received a total of \$1,322,790 in federal funding to The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP); \$622,379 through the FFCRA and \$700,411 through the CARES Act. These funds were added to the existing contract with the Wyoming Food Bank of the Rockies for the purchase of food for food banks and administrative costs.

\$61K for Child Welfare

DFS received \$61,093 through the CARES Act for child welfare services to support family preservation activities in response to COVID-19.

Indirect Federal Funding

In addition to direct federal funding, DFS received indirect funds through enhanced federal payments and allocation of CARES Act funds by the Governor's Office.

Enhanced Federal Payments

The FFCRA authorized changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), including:

- Emergency allotments (EA) – increases SNAP benefits to the maximum allowable; and,
- Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) – issues SNAP benefits to children eligible for free and reduced lunch whose schools are closed for five days or more. To date, \$1,794,326 has been paid in P-EBT benefits in Wyoming.

SNAP benefits are funded 100% by federal funds, with states providing fifty percent (50%) of the funding for administrative costs. The CARES Act appropriated \$15.8B to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to fund EA and P-EBT.

The FFCRA also authorized a 6.2 percentage point increase in the federal medical assistance percentage (FMAP) for all states. Wyoming's FMAP for child welfare services provided under Title IV-E increased from fifty percent (50%) to 56.2% beginning January 1st, 2020 and continuing until the last day of the calendar quarter in which the public health emergency ends. In the first and second quarters of calendar year 2020 (January through June), Wyoming received an additional \$38,159 in federal funds for foster care maintenance payments and \$65,329 for adoption assistance payments under the enhanced FMAP rate.

Governor's Office

The Governor's Office received \$1.25B via the CARES Act to address the impacts of COVID-19 on the state. Agencies were asked to review the needs of their clients and submit requests for funding. DFS has received approval or preliminary approval for \$6.1M in CARES Act funds.

- Approved - \$1M for mental health and substance abuse screening and treatment for families involved in the child welfare system and impacted by COVID;
- Preliminary approval - \$1M to address food insecurity by replenishing food stock and enhancing food pantry infrastructure in Wyoming; and,
- Preliminary approval - \$4.1M for child care, to include child care assistance payments, grants to providers, and reimbursement to families who have incurred additional costs for child care due to COVID.

The Governor's Office also received \$4.7M through the U.S. Department of Education through the GEER Fund. \$243K was allocated to DFS for services and programming to support children transitioning from pre-K to Kindergarten, with funds distributed through Wyoming Kids First.

Table 1, below, summarizes the grant funds received by Division and Program. Total funding amounts for enhanced federal match will not be known until the enhanced match period has ended.

Table 1. COVID Relief Funds by Division and Program

Division	Program	Funding Authorization	Funding Amount
Economic Security	CCDBG/Child care	CARES Act	\$4,166,167
		Governor's Office	\$4,100,000
		GEER	\$243,000
	Homelessness	CARES Act	\$4,055,227
	LIEAP	CARES Act	\$2,416,112
	TEFAP	FCRA	\$622,379
		CARES Act	\$700,411
	Emergency Food & Shelter	CARES Act	\$292,263
		Governor's Office	\$1,000,000
Social Services	Social services	CARES Act	\$61,093
	Mental health & substance abuse treatment	Governor's Office	\$1,000,000
TOTAL			\$18,656,652